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Patterns : Selecting and Altering

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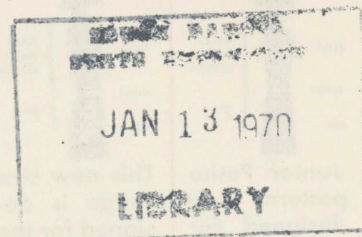
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PATTERNS



SELECTING AND ALTERING

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MEASUREMENTS CHART

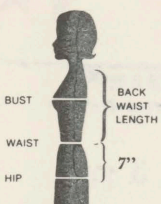
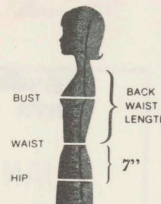
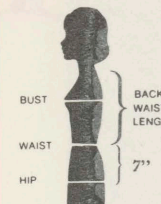
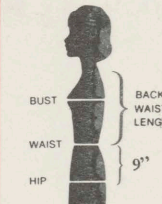
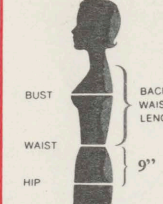
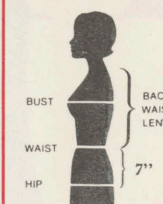
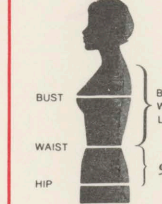
Junior Petite	Young Junior/Teen	Miss Petite	Junior	Misses'	Half Size	Women's
About 5' to 5'1"	About 5'1" to 5'3"	About 5'2" to 5'3"	About 5'4" to 5'5"	About 5'5" to 5'6"	About 5'2" to 5'3"	About 5'5" to 5'6"
 <p>BUST WAIST HIP</p> <p>BACK WAIST LENGTH 7"</p>	 <p>BUST WAIST HIP</p> <p>BACK WAIST LENGTH 7"</p>	 <p>BUST WAIST HIP</p> <p>BACK WAIST LENGTH 7"</p>	 <p>BUST WAIST HIP</p> <p>BACK WAIST LENGTH 9"</p>	 <p>BUST WAIST HIP</p> <p>BACK WAIST LENGTH 9"</p>	 <p>BUST WAIST HIP</p> <p>BACK WAIST LENGTH 7"</p>	 <p>BUST WAIST HIP</p> <p>BACK WAIST LENGTH 9"</p>
Junior Petite patterns are designed for a well proportioned, petite figure; about 5' to 5'1" without shoes.	This new size range is designed for the developing pre-teen and teen figures about 5'1" to 5'3" without shoes.	This new size range is designed for the shorter Miss figure; about 5'2" to 5'3" without shoes.	Junior patterns are designed for a well proportioned, shorter waisted figure; about 5'4" to 5'5" without shoes.	Misses' patterns are designed for a well proportioned, and developed figure; about 5'5" to 5'6" without shoes.	Half-size patterns are for a fully developed figure with a short back-waist length. Waist and hip are larger in proportion to bust than other figure types; about 5'2" to 5'3" without shoes.	Women's patterns are designed for the larger, more fully mature figure; about 5'5" to 5'6" without shoes.

Figure 1.

SELECTING AND ALTERING patterns

By Elizabeth K. Easton, extension clothing specialist

A pattern is a blueprint—a precise measuring device. Following this blueprint does not, however, insure a successful garment unless the correct pattern has been selected. The “right” pattern is one that makes you look like you want to—taller, shorter, slimmer, fuller, or just as you are. But its more than that. The “right” pattern for you is also one that corresponds to your proportions and body measurements.

Pattern companies offer seven different figure types with a range of sizes. Take your measurements and discover which one is right, or nearly so, for you.

HOW TO MEASURE FOR A PATTERN

Accurate measurements are the key to a good fit. Take them over well-fitted foundation garments and a slip of the type and condition to be worn under the finished garment. Pattern size and figure type are determined by 4 basic measurements:

- ▶ bust
- ▶ waist
- ▶ hip
- ▶ back waist length

Since it is almost impossible to take one's own measurements accurately, enlist someone's help and instruct her carefully.

You will need:

- tape measure that does not stretch
- yard stick
- narrow belt, ribbon or paper tape to place around natural waist and neckline to serve as a baseline for lengthwise measurements.

**YOUR DRESS WILL BE
WHAT YOUR PATTERN IS.**

Take these basic measurements:

Bust—over the fullest part. Be sure to keep tape parallel to floor.

Waist—at natural waistline. Snug, but not tight.

Hip—Seven inches or nine inches below natural waistline depending on figure type.

Back waist—From prominent bone at base of neck to natural waist.

Compare these measurements with standard measurements on the pattern to determine your correct figure type and size. Body measurements are **actual**. They are **not** the same as pattern measurements. Patterns include ease or tolerance to allow for comfort and freedom of movement. Some patterns also allow design ease to give a fashion effect; this varies with fashion trends.

Additional measurements are required to supply the desired amount of ease and add refinement to the fit of your garment. Actual body measurement, plus recommended ease, compared with the measurements of the pattern at corresponding points, will insure a smooth comfortably fitted garment. See figure 2.

1. **Shoulder length**—from neck base to top of arm. (Both sides)
2. **Center front waist** — from base of neck to waist.
3. **Front waist**—from middle shoulder to bust point, then from bust to waist. (Both sides)
4. **Under arm length**—from arm pit to waist. Subtract one inch.
5. **Chest width**—three inches down from base of neck to natural break between arm and body. (Some call this high bust.) Four inches down from center back neck to natural break between arm and body.
6. **Upper arm girth**—half way between shoulder and elbow with elbow bent.
7. **Elbow girth**—with elbow bent.

8. **Lower arm girth**—midway between elbow and waist.

9. **Arm length**—(with arm bent) shoulder to elbow, elbow to waist.

10. **High hip girth**—three inches below center front waistline.

11. **Skirt length**—(Stand in average height heels) center front; center back; left side; right side. Measure from natural waistline to the floor. Subtract the distance from the floor you want your *finished* skirt to be.

Use the chart on page 5 to record your measurements. Add the recommended amount of ease and compare this with the measurement of your pattern from seamline to seamline to determine any alterations that are needed.

Suit jacket patterns include the ease needed for wearing over a lining and a lightweight blouse. Coat patterns include ease for wearing over a dress.

Select skirt and pants patterns by waist measurement. If the hip is much larger in proportion than the waist, select the size by the hip measurement, and alter at the waist. Measurements for pants include hip, waist, crotch length, and length from ankle to waist. Crotch length is determined by taking the measurement while seated. Measure from the side of the waistline to the seat of the chair.

OTHER POINTS TO CONSIDER

Selecting a pattern that fits is only part of the successful garment. You must consider *garment design*. Remember, your eye reacts to what it sees, and many factors influence the eye. Since the eye is lazy and likes to move horizontally, as it does when you read, you must force it to move *upward*.

Study the pattern you have selected. Visualize it on your figure. How does your eye react? Will the pattern help you look the way you want to look? Lines create spaces which give illusions. Do the basic lines of the pattern cause your eye to move up and down creating an illusion of height? Or do they cause your eye to move from side to side creating an illusion of width?

Before you buy a pattern, ask yourself:

1. Is the style in keeping with fashion trends?
2. Does the pattern suit the fabric you have chosen?
3. Is the pattern suited to your sewing ability?
4. Is it suitable for the occasions for which it will be worn?
5. Is it available in the size and figure type that suits you?
6. If alterations are needed, can they be made easily?

Study the simple illustrations in Figure 3. See how lines and spaces play tricks on your eyes. Can you relate these to the design of a dress pattern?

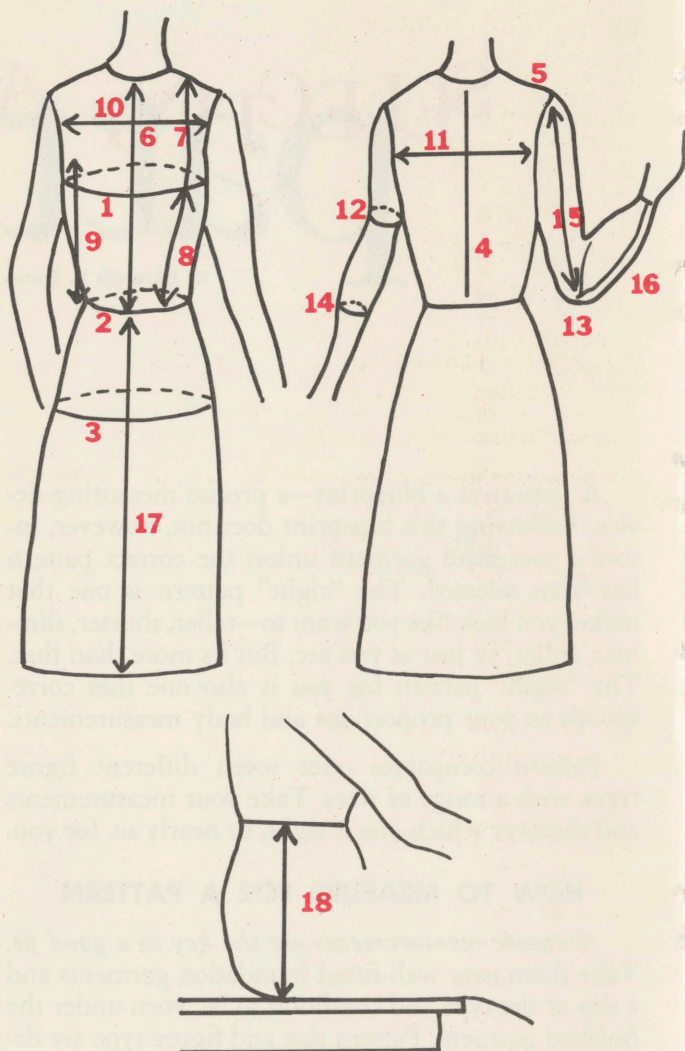


Figure 2. Measurement Points

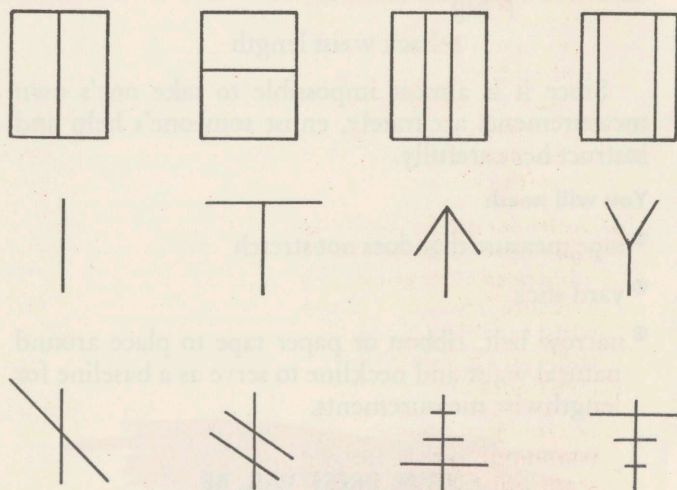


Figure 3. Lines and Space

MY PATTERN BLUEPRINT

Measurements Needed for Pattern Size	My Measurements	+ Recommended Ease	= Total Measurements Needed	Pattern Measurements	Adjustment Needed (+ or - inches)
1. Bust—over fullest part (snug not tight)		2-4"			
2. Waist—comfortably at natural waistline		$\frac{3}{4}$ -1"			
3. Hip*—over fullest part; varies but approximately 7-9" below natural waistline		2"			
4. Back waist length—from prominent bone at back neck base to natural waist		$\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ "			
Other Measurements Needed for a Smooth Fit					
5. Shoulder length from base of neck to top of arm		none			
6. Front waist from base of neck to waist		$\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ "			
7. From middle shoulder to bust point		none			
8. From bust point to waist		$\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ "			
9. Under arm length (subtract 1 inch) [†]		$\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ "			
10. Chest width		1"			
11. Back width across shoulder		1"			
12. Upper sleeve girth (with elbow bent)		2"			
13. Elbow girth (with elbow bent)		2"			
14. Lower sleeve girth		1"			
15. Length of sleeve from shoulder tip to bent elbow		$\frac{1}{4}$ "			
16. . . . to wrist		$\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ "			
17. Skirt length from natural waistline to desired hemline ... to floor-center front ... right side ... center back ... left side		none none none none none			
18. Crotch length for average figure—seat person on table or straight chair. Measure from natural waist to table top or chair seat at side seam. (See figure 3)		$\frac{3}{4}$ "	(See section on fitting pants)		
19. For rounded figure—(standing) from center front waistline, through crotch, to center back waistline.		3"	(See section on fitting pants)		

*If considering a straight skirt, take extra measurement 10-12 inches below waistline. Allow 3-3½ inches ease.

[†]To measure the underarm length accurately place a yardstick or rectangular piece of cardboard under the arm horizontally with the arm down. Measure from the top of this marker to the natural waistline.

Beautiful fabric, flattering lines and colors to enhance your natural coloring cannot overcome the misfortune of a garment that does not fit.

Consider Pattern and Fabric Together:

- Soft fullness and draped effects suggest soft fabric.
- Pleats and sharp detail suggest fabric with body or crispness.
- Patterns with many pieces suggest smooth, plain fabrics.
- Prints or plaid or fabrics with bold design call for simple patterns.

Check the back of the pattern envelope for recommended fabrics.

If You Are a Beginner, Choose:

- simple designs
- firmly woven fabric
- solid colors, or
- small all-over prints

A well-fitted garment is more than the sum of conforming measurements and recommended ease. It's correct placing of seamlines and darts, perfection

of grainline, and freedom from wrinkles. When a dress fits properly it looks well. It fits easy and comfortably yet is snug enough to have that look of belonging to its wearer. It eliminates undue pull and strain. Fabric is conserved and money is saved. A garment that fits is much easier to make if you *alter the pattern before you cut the fabric*.

The well-fitted garment, on the figure with good posture and body alignment, lines up in such a way that a plumb line falling from behind the ear (through the neck, shoulder, underarm, side, and ankle) will correspond with shoulder seam, underarm, and side seams.

Individual variations in posture may require some alterations of the pattern, even though measurements do not indicate this. Fitting difficulties also can often be taken care of simply by changing the type of *undergarments being worn or not being worn*.

Smoothness is a key to good fit. Often darts, changed in some way, are the simplest and most satisfactory means of correcting fit. Darts permit the fabric to be molded or shaped to the contour of the body without distorting the grainline. Darts are located anywhere within the radius of a body curve.

The distance between the bust points, while not included in the measurement chart, is an important measurement because it influences the position of the front waist darts. This measurement ranges from 7 to 8½ inches for the average figure.

Whenever one part of a pattern is altered, consider how this alteration affects the rest of the garment. For example, increasing or decreasing the width of a dart at the waistline may create the need for making or releasing an underarm dart. (See Figure 4.)

Many alterations involve lengthening or shortening a pattern piece. This may affect grainline, dart lines, and contour edges. If altering a pattern piece creates a jog, connect the two lines gradually to form one smooth, continuous line.

Keep in mind that *grainline* marked on the pattern by the pattern maker is correct and *must be maintained throughout the alteration process*. For that reason extend the grainline marking of any piece to be altered to the outer edge and mark the crosswise grain by drawing a line on the pattern piece at right angles to the lengthwise grain.

There are five specific check points of grainline which are particularly important to a good fit. These are not necessarily measurement points, but are locations where grain is most likely to give trouble. See Figure 5. The grainline of a separate skirt is controlled at the waistline.

Pattern alterations involve subtraction, division and sometimes multiplication. Lengthening or increasing the size at any point requires addition. Shortening or decreasing the width at any point calls for

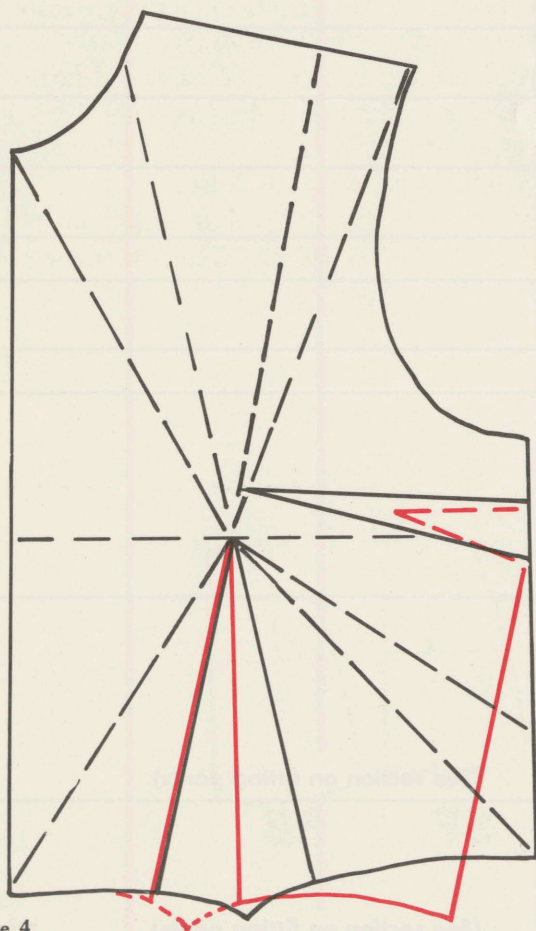


Figure 4.

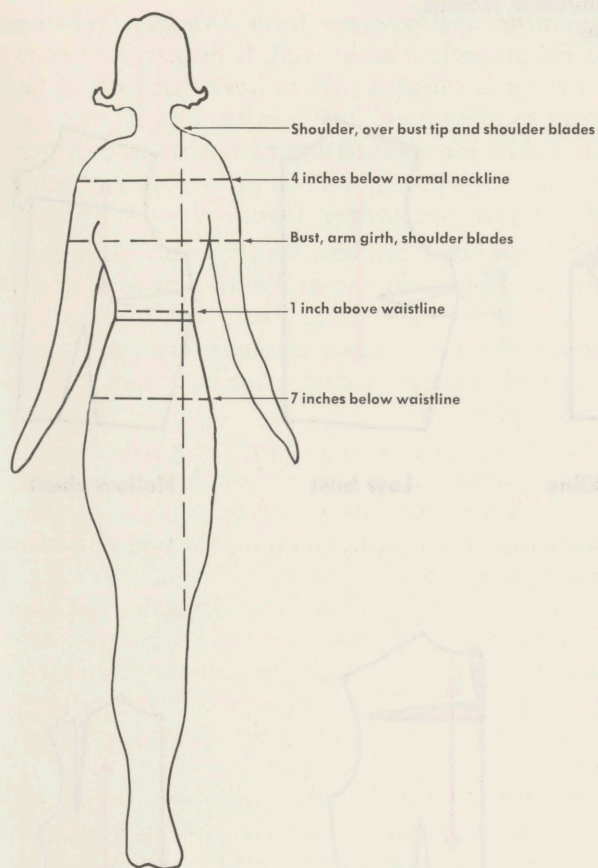


Figure 5. Grainline Check Points

subtraction. Distributing space, either by adding or decreasing uses the division process. Alteration is largely a matter of distances, but the original line and shape should be maintained wherever possible. Straight lines, such as center fronts and backs must remain straight.

Locations of movement are the areas in which alterations are generally made with changes occurring *between seam lines* rather than *at* the seamline.

Figure 6 indicates the general location of most alterations other than changes of darts. The paper pattern is slashed, closed (tucked), or spread at these points. Whatever the adjustment, the resulting pattern **MUST ALWAYS LIE FLAT**.

FOR SUCCESSFUL ALTERATIONS

1. Analyze the problem. Remember that **PRINCIPLES**, not rules, govern alterations.
2. Center fronts and center backs are seldom alteration points.
3. Lengthwise alterations are made between points of movement:
 - shoulder and bust
 - bust and waist
 - waist and knee
 - knee and ankle
 - shoulder and elbow
 - elbow and wrist
4. Retain original structural or design seams.
5. Locate problem areas and work from there.
6. Lines for alteration are made parallel with lengthwise and/or crosswise grain.
7. Do not carry sleeve alteration into sleeve cap unless you expect to alter the armscye.
8. Alter the skirt between side seams and darts.
9. The larger the curve, the larger the darts in the curved area.
10. An altered pattern must lie flat.
11. Buy patterns according to bust measurement.
12. Know what results you desire. *Measure twice—Cut once!*

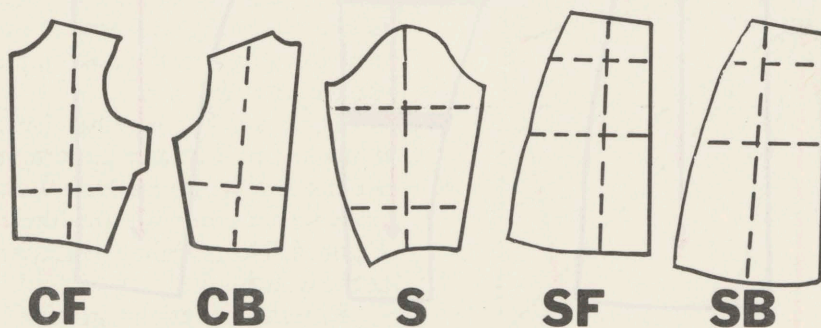
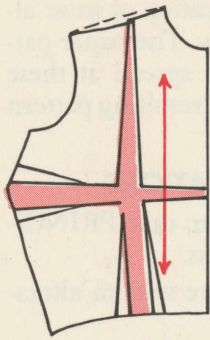
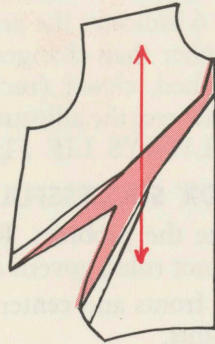


Figure 6. Basic Alteration Points

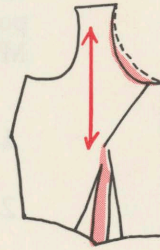
Figure 7. Some of the Most Commonly Needed
Pattern Alterations



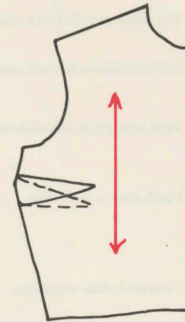
Large bust



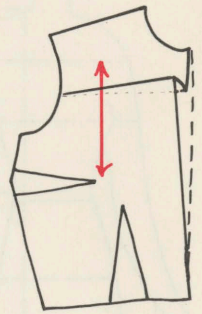
Large bust



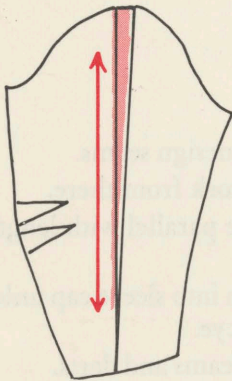
Gaping neckline



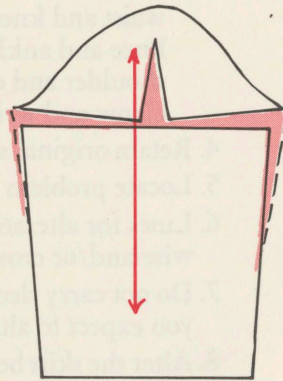
Low bust



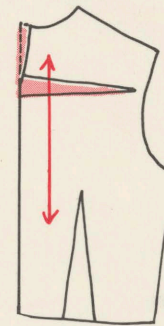
Hollow chest



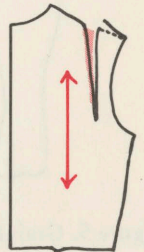
Heavy upper arm



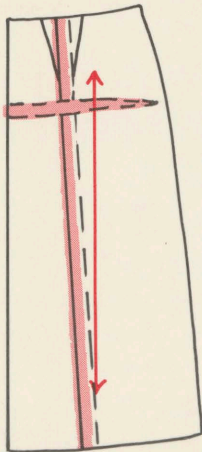
Underarm strain



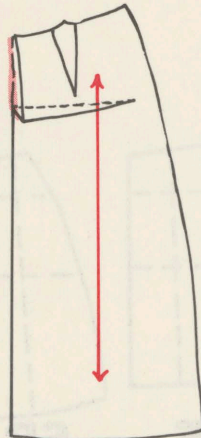
Rounded back



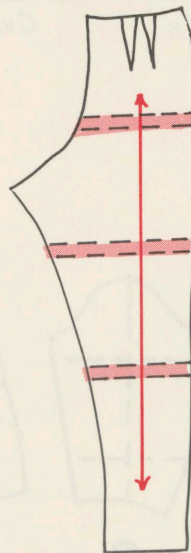
Wide shoulder



Large derriere



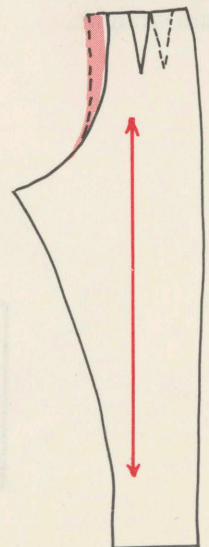
Sway back



General
lengthening



Enlarged
derriere



Wrinkles at
center-front crotch